that with effect from 1st November, 1999 no industry will be permitted to discharge any industrial effluent in the river Yamuna directly or indirectly which do not conform to the parameters prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board. In view of the court order, Delhi Pollution Control Committee has identified 650 industiral units in non-conforming areas of Delhi with the potential of creating high level of water pollution as per the prescribed environmental norms. Directions have been issued by Delhi pollution Control Committee to these units to either install Effluent Treatment Plants to meet the notified standard or close down the operations till they suffice stipulated conditions.

Rate of Deforestation and Afforestation

433. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that deforestation is closely linked with land productivity,

(b) if so, what is the rate of deforestation and afforestation in India; and

(c) whether there is any gap in this regard; if so, in what manner Government propose to bridge this gap?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Deforestation adversely effects the land productivity. At present annual rate of deforestation in the country is about 1,29,000 ha. whereas the annual rate of afforestation/reforestation is around 12,00,000 ha. on various categories of forest and non-forest lands. Besides deforestation, forests are also being degraded due to increasing withdrawals of firewood and other produce by the dependent population and also due to overgrazing and increasing incidences of fire, pests and pathogens. The extent of forest cover as estimated by the forest Survey of India is almost consistent around 19% of the total geographic area of the country since 1987. However the afforestation in small blcoks and strips do not figure in the data of forest cover due to limitation of monitoring mechanism available with the Forest Survey of India. For the sustainable development of forest, the Government of India have formulated a National Forestry Action Programme for the next 20 years.

Forest Cover in Assam

434. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the percentage of forest cover in Assam at present; and

(b) what is Government's proposal to improve the situation there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) As per State of Forest Report, 1997, forest cover of Assam is 30.4% of the geographical area of the State.